

7 May 1976

INTERAGENCY INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM\*

SUBJECT: Kenya's Regional Position and the Possibility  
Of Hostilities

KEY POINTS

- The government of Kenya is increasingly concerned that hostilities with Uganda and Somalia could occur in the next year or so.
  - Both Uganda and Somalia claim sizable chunks of Kenyan territory.
- Relations between Kenya and Uganda, never good since Amin took power in 1971, have soured in recent months.
  - Uganda has launched small-scale forays into Kenya, ostensibly to recover stolen property, and the Kenyans have retaliated by imposing economic restrictions on Uganda.
  - There are likely to be ebbs and flows in the level of rhetoric and friction between the

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\* This memorandum was prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State.

two countries, but the general trend of events will be toward worsening relations and the possibility of hostilities.

- In the event of major hostilities between Uganda and Kenya, Uganda would have an initial advantage, although it probably could not sustain major operations very long.
  - Uganda not only has a much larger military force, but it has also received large amounts of military equipment from the Soviet Union.
  - Kenyan forces, on the other hand, are better trained and disciplined.
  - Ugandan forces would probably get bogged down fairly quickly in any major military push against Kenya, but even so they might be able to occupy a portion of western Kenya.
  
- Nairobi is also concerned about the prospect of hostilities in the Horn of Africa between Somalia and Ethiopia over the French Territory of the Afars and Issas.
  - Aligned with Ethiopia in a mutual defense pact, Kenya fears that it would be drawn into such a conflict, either directly or indirectly.

- In the event of Somali-Ethiopian hostilities, Kenya would be reluctant to commit its own weak forces against the more numerous and Soviet-equipped Somalis, although it might be willing to reinforce its border units in order to tie down some Somali troops.
- We do not believe that Somalia will launch a conventional attack against Kenya at least until the FTAI issue is resolved.
- If conflict erupted over the FTAI, Somalia would probably try to keep Kenyan troops tied down by encouraging the insurgency in northeastern Kenya on a modest scale.
- We believe that the Kenyans could effectively deal with such an insurgency threat.
- If, contrary to our judgment, Kenya becomes involved in conventional hostilities with Somalia, there is a good chance that it would soon find itself faced with the prospect of having to cope simultaneously with two threats and two fronts, since Uganda would be likely to attempt to take advantage of Kenya's difficulties.
- Some Kenyan territory would probably be occupied by the attacking forces for a limited period, but it is doubtful that an invading force, be it Somali or Ugandan, would be able to push very far into Kenya before it was stopped by its own logistic problems and by Kenyan attacks and harassments.

THE DETAILS

1. Kenya sees itself seriously threatened by hostile neighbors -- Somalia and Uganda -- who possess sophisticated Soviet weapons and claim parts of Kenyan territory (see map). Nairobi is also concerned over the increasing likelihood of open conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia as France withdraws from the French Territory of the Afars and Issas (FTAI).\* Kenya believes it will be inevitably drawn into such a conflict, either directly or indirectly.

2. Nairobi has traditionally maintained one of the smaller armies in sub-Saharan Africa, (see table). The Kenyan leaders -- especially President Kenyatta -- have not wanted a large standing army. Tribal considerations have been a major factor in this decision. The army has long been the only significant institution in Kenya not under direct control of the Kikuyu, Kenyatta's tribe. Kenyatta, however, has been gradually but effectively changing the balance to favor the Kikuyu through reorganizations and promotions. Apparently as a counterweight to the army, Kenyan leaders also have made sure that the elite paramilitary General Service Unit remains heavily armed, mobile, and dominated by the Kikuyu.

3. The Kenyans have in the past been able to take some comfort in a mutual defense pact with Ethiopia and a long-standing tacit agreement with the UK that provides for British assistance on request in the event of major internal trouble or an external attack on Kenya. Nairobi now realizes that the chances of Ethiopian assistance have been diminished by Addis Ababa's internal instability, its problems with Somalia, and by troubles with insurgencies in Eritrea and other provinces. Nairobi

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\* For a fuller discussion on the situation in the FTAI see SNIE 76-1-76, "Prospects for and Implications of Conflict in the Horn of Africa over the Next Year or So," March 1976, SECRET/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT.



also believes, rightly in our view, that it can no longer count on British assistance in the event of an emergency.

The Kenya-Uganda Balance

4. Relations between Kenya and Uganda, never smooth since Idi Amin came to power in 1971, have reached their nadir in the last few months. In February, Amin laid claim to part of western Kenya. Nairobi responded by stimulating a series of virulent anti-Amin demonstrations and a boycott at Kenya's harbors of goods destined for Uganda.

5. The Kenyans later eased the boycott, but imposed a number of economic restrictions on Kampala. They cut in half Uganda's fuel allotment from the Nairobi refinery and are requiring cash payment for petroleum products and other goods. The sanctions appear to be hurting the Ugandan economy. This may have provoked the mercurial Amin into launching some cross-border forays by helicopter-borne Ugandan troops this month -- allegedly in search of rustled cattle. Amin has followed this up with verbal threats against Kenya that he has linked to criticism of Secretary Kissinger's trip to Africa and charges of collusion between Washington and Nairobi.

6. Other factors have contributed to tensions between Kenya and Uganda. Nairobi newspapers have frequently published stories of alleged atrocities by Uganda perpetrated against Kenyans. Such stories have recently gained increased credibility among Kenyans by the well publicized disappearance in Kampala a few months ago of a Kenyan student, now widely presumed to have died at the hands of Ugandan security police.

7. Kenyan leaders have long been uneasy about Amin's erratic behavior. Their concerns have been heightened by Amin's accumulation of Soviet weapons, by the presence of Soviet advisers in Uganda, and by Amin's ties to radical Arab states and Somalia. Kenya

is concerned that Amin might make some supportive military move if Mogadiscio instigated a renewal of insurgency in northeast Kenya -- it supported such an effort in the 1960s -- or ordered the Somali army into action against Ethiopia or Kenya.

8. Amin is probably planning to keep alive the threat of additional cross-border raids to keep Nairobi off balance and to emphasize for domestic consumption the "threat" to Uganda. The Kenyans are nervous over reports that Amin has been stirring up his senior officers with threats to "crush Kenyatta." Nairobi fears that the likelihood of some erratic move by Amin -- a terrorist incident, an assassination attempt against Kenyatta, or the seizure of some Kenyan territory -- will increase when Amin ends his term as chairman of the Organization of African Unity in July. Our judgment is that these concerns in Nairobi are exaggerated, but we cannot completely rule out such actions because of Amin's personality.

9. The Kenyans are being careful not to push Amin too far publicly. President Kenyatta has returned the two Ugandan helicopters and several soldiers captured during the recent incursions, although he has privately issued a stern warning to Amin. Nairobi may ease the current economic restrictions once it feels it has made its point. Amin is already complaining loudly about a fuel shortage, and the Kenyans are probably wary about giving him grounds for justifying some military move by claiming he is being economically strangled.

10. Nonetheless, Nairobi has recently begun providing limited covert support for a group of Ugandan exiles in Kenya who have been plotting the overthrow of Amin. The group does not appear well organized, and the effort could backfire on Nairobi by providing justification for Amin to take counter-action against Kenya. For example, Amin might respond to any Kenyan-supported attempt to unseat him with a greater show of force on the border. In such a case,

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a major border incident could arise from a miscalculation by either side.

11. Kenyan concerns about Amin are compounded by his overwhelming superiority both in weapons and number of troops. Although Kenyan units are better trained and disciplined than Ugandan forces, Kenyan leaders are uneasy over an official assessment questioning the will of the army to defend the nation's borders. Some army officers are concerned that the attention Nairobi is paying to Uganda will divert it from what they see as the far more serious Somali threat.

12. Recognizing its military inferiority, Kenya has approached the US and other potential sources for military assistance, especially aircraft. (Kenya continues, however, to turn down Soviet offers of military assistance.) Kenya has tried to interest the British in providing troops or aircraft for a joint exercise or some other show of force, preferably near the border, but London apparently has turned Nairobi down.

#### The Uganda Side

13. Amin has his own army problems. In addition to chronic indiscipline, plotting, and purges in the military, some officers reportedly do not favor Amin's hostility toward Kenya and are unhappy with the shortages of food and supplies resulting from Kenya's economic restrictions. Nevertheless, Amin apparently feels the need to emphasize constantly external threats to divert popular attention from the economic and other effects of his five years of maladministration and domestic turmoil. Tanzania, the US, Israel, and the UK have been, and occasionally still are, the objects of Amin's wrath. Kenya is now in the spotlight.

14. In the event of a conflict between Somalia and Kenya, Amin might be emboldened by his relative military superiority to make an adventurous move such

as attempting to seize a piece of Kenyan territory. In spite of Uganda's initial advantage, however, it probably could not sustain major operations for long. Uganda has few ground force officers well trained in their specialities and even fewer qualified jet pilots. Uganda would probably get bogged down quickly by logistic problems resulting from inefficiency in the military and the country's depressed economy, and supplies and fuel for the Ugandan armed forces which must transit Kenya would be quickly cut off.

The Horn of Africa

15. Kenya's policy toward the Horn of Africa countries continues to be marked by an alliance with Ethiopia, its partner in a 13-year-old defense pact, and by a deep distrust of Somalia, which claims about one fifth of Kenya as well as a large part of Ethiopia and all of the neighboring FTAI. Kenya supports Paris' announced intention to grant independence to the FTAI, and has called for OAU and UN guarantees for the independence and territorial integrity of the state.

16. The likelihood of military conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia over the FTAI has sharpened Kenya's worries about its security and the intentions of the Mogadiscio government. Kenya fears it would be drawn into such a conflict because of its defense pact with Addis Ababa.

17. Nairobi also believes that a successful Somali takeover of the FTAI would encourage Mogadiscio to reassert its claims to the northeastern part of Kenya inhabited primarily by ethnic Somalis and to press a new insurgency effort there. The Kenyans already suspect that Amin's recent claims to parts of Kenya were made in collusion with Somali President Siad in an effort to keep the Nairobi government off balance. We have no hard evidence to support the Kenyan suspicions, but relations between Amin and Siad are relatively close.

18. The Soviet presence in Somalia has heightened Kenyan concerns about the Mogadiscio government. Kenya's suspicions of the Soviets date from Moscow's support for leftist Kenyan political figures several years ago and the heavy-handed activities of Soviet diplomats in the 1960s. Kenyan wariness has been sustained by Soviet military assistance to Somalia and Uganda and by the establishment of Soviet facilities on the northern Somali coast and rumors of Soviet installations nearer to Kenya.

19. The Kenyans have tried to interest Egypt, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia in an informal joint effort to preserve peace in the area. Details of Kenya's plan are sketchy, but Nairobi probably has emphasized to these Muslim states the extent of Soviet influence in Somalia and has proposed that they apply diplomatic pressure on Somalia, a fellow Arab League member. We do not believe, however, that this Kenyan effort will succeed in bringing any significant pressure on Somalia.

20. The revived Somali threat has also drawn Kenya closer to Addis Ababa than it has been since the overthrow of Haile Selassie. As provided by the mutual defense pact, officials from both sides met early this year to coordinate contingency planning. Nairobi has tentatively agreed to permit Ethiopia's armed forces to use Kenyan airports and other facilities in the event of war with Somalia.

21. Nairobi, however, would be reluctant to commit its own weak forces directly against Somalia. Should Ethiopia request direct Kenyan involvement in a conflict with Somalia, Nairobi, with its present capabilities, would probably be inclined to do little more than reinforce its border units in an effort to tie down some Somali troops.

22. We do not believe that Somalia will launch a conventional attack against Kenya at least until the FTAI issue is resolved. Its limitations for waging war on two fronts simultaneously would be a major constraint. Mogadiscio would also prefer to continue

concentrating its attention on the FTAI and harassing Addis Ababa by supporting insurgencies in southern Ethiopia. The Somalis recognize that Kenya does not present a threat to its intentions toward the FTAI and Ethiopia. If conflict erupted over the FTAI, however, Somalia would probably try to keep Kenyan troops tied down by encouraging the insurgency in northeastern Kenya on a modest scale. We believe that the Kenyan armed forces could effectively deal with such an insurgency threat.

23. But if conventional hostilities did break out between Somalia and Kenya, the Kenyans would be hard pressed and would suffer initial reverses in this situation. They would also be faced with the threat of a two-front conflict, since Uganda might attempt to exploit the situation by moving against Kenya. Nairobi's relative military inferiority would probably result in the occupation of some Kenyan territory for a limited period. Whether or not Ethiopia came to Kenya's aid, it is doubtful that an invading force, be it Somali or Ugandan, would be able to push very far into Kenya before it was stopped by its own logistic problems and by Kenyan attacks and harassment.

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COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS AND MAJOR EQUIPMENT

	<u>Somalia</u>	<u>Kenya</u>	<u>Uganda</u>
<u>Army</u>			
Personnel	22,000	6,500	17,000
Tanks	250	None	73
Armored Vehicles	375	73	100
Anti-Tank Weapons/ Rocket Launchers	136	475	20
Mortars	130	129	80
Field Artillery	232	None	53
Recoilless Rifles	None	20	36
AAA Weapons	420	None	80
<u>Air Force</u>			
Personnel	750	760	2,000
Bombers	3	6	None
Jet Fighters	50	3	68
SAM Battalions	4	None	Unknown
Helicopters	12	None	9
<u>Navy</u>			
Personnel	200	340	None
Ships	14	4	None
<u>Paramilitary</u>			
Personnel	1,500	1,600	500

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